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ABSTRACT

This book analyzes the crisis facing the American liberal arts college and offers a proposal for its reform. It argues that a college's infidelity to the ideals of liberal education adversely affects its relationship to society, its educational program, and its teachers. A definition and a defense of liberal education ideals is offered. The author stresses that the liberal arts college must not submit to any ideology, political agenda, or vocational interest; that the college's educational program must be centered around a set of rational, theoretical, and practical skills; and that the college teacher must be autonomous and uncompromised by scholarly or administrative responsibilities. This argument is presented in 10 chapters grouped into two parts. Part 1 describes the ways that typical liberal arts colleges have failed to deliver on their promises of a liberal education, and by so doing, have lost their institutional integrity. Part 2 specifies the principles that must be adopted to recover this integrity. Individual chapters address principles concerned with: (1) the nature of liberal education, (2) the importance of institutional independence, (3) the ideal liberal arts curriculum, and (4) the need for teacher autonomy. (Individual chapters contain references.)

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